

Editorial: *Journal of Radical Librarianship*

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ABSTRACT: The *Journal of Radical Librarianship* began as an idea at a meeting of Radical Librarians Collective, a group of library and information workers who aim to challenge the influence of neoliberal policy on the profession, as a way to bring theory and practice together. The journal will publish high-quality work that contributes to a discourse around critical library and information theory and practice. It is international in scope and part of a broader community of researchers and practitioners in this area.

Keywords: radical librarianship, editorial



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The *Journal of Radical Librarianship* began as an idea at a meeting of [Radical Librarians Collective](#)¹ in London, UK in May 2014. This group is a loose affiliation of like-minded library and information workers who aim to challenge the influence of neoliberal policy on the profession by creating a supportive environment to resist the marketisation of libraries, and find ways of acting that align with our progressive values. It was suggested that publishing work on radical librarianship in the form of an academic journal would be a way to bring theory and practice together. The conceit that librarianship is politically and ideologically neutral² could be one of the contributing factors that leads to an acceptance of changes to libraries which are a direct result of neoliberal policy, for example the drastic funding cuts currently being experienced by many UK library services.³ While there has been strong⁴ and sometimes effective⁵ resistance to these cuts from some library workers, the fact that leadership within the profession as a whole has long been imbued with a managerial mindset means that the radical progressive values that underlie librarianship have been relegated to a low status and rarely make themselves shown in high-level decision making. Academic work which bridges critical theoretical ideas with implementation by practitioners is one way to try and combine their strengths to enable progressive change.

For the purposes of this journal we are using a loose definition of 'radical librarianship' which broadly means a focus on the ethical roots of librarianship, and will publish any high-quality work that contributes to a discourse around critical library and information theory and practice. Partly this is because it should not be up to any one individual or small group to control the precise scope of discourse, and partly because our shared understanding of librarianship is continually growing and deepening so an openness to new ideas and interpretations is necessary.

The origins and purpose of this journal, as described above, are strongly centred on the UK only because that is where the people who initiated it happen to be based. We consider the journal to be international in scope and strongly encourage contributions from library and information workers, researchers, and academics from anywhere in the world. The current editorial team is based in the UK and north America because of the limits of our initial contacts. We hope that with time editors and authors from beyond the English-speaking world will become a part of the journal and help progress it beyond these initial limitations. One way we intend to explore this is by publishing work in multiple languages, as a recognition that sharing knowledge between cultures should not rely solely on accepting one particular language as dominant.

There are some other journals and publishers which produce work related to the scope of this journal, and we'd like to mention a few of these in order to acknowledge their value and because we see the *Journal of Radical Librarianship* as complementary to them rather than in competition. [Progressive Librarian](#) is a journal produced by the Progressive Librarians Guild in the US;⁶ [Library Juice Press](#) is a publisher of a number of books on 'theoretical and

practical issues in librarianship from a critical perspective';⁷ [Collaborative Librarianship](#) is a journal publishing work on cooperative librarianship;⁸ and [In the Library with the Lead Pipe](#) is an open access, open peer reviewed journal with progressive publication practices.⁹ This is just a selection of English-language work in similar areas which demonstrates that there is a healthy ecosystem of library and information authors who are interested in exploring radical and critical stances. We would like to position *Journal of Radical Librarianship* as an attempt to enrich the existing community by applying innovative approaches to scholarly communication to the field.

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